



June 29, 2022

The Honorable James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Comer and Ranking Member Foxx:

This responds to your letter to the U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE) dated June 15, 2022, in which you requested that OGE provide the following information:

1. A list of all employees in the Biden administration who have worked on the administration's student loan forgiveness policy;
2. All documents and communications indicating whether those employees have outstanding student loans that would be forgiven in whole or in part under the policy;
3. A copy of any ethics waivers given to those employees to work on the student loan forgiveness policy; and
4. A signed copy of all ethics pledges pertaining to individuals identified above.

The executive branch ethics program is decentralized by statute and is carried out by each of the nearly 140 agencies in the executive branch, including the White House, which has its own ethics office for White House employees.¹ Although OGE leads and oversees the ethics program, it generally does not directly advise, counsel, monitor, or maintain the records for the millions of executive branch employees.² This means that to the extent documents and information exist that are responsive to your request, they are not available from a single source. In addition, there is some information that is not within OGE's purview to collect or maintain.

Other than waivers sought by an agency to allow an individual to work on a matter that poses a potential conflict, OGE does not have access to documents or information about the work assignments individuals have in support of an administration's policies. Signed ethics pledges

¹ 5 U.S.C. app. §§ 101 *et seq.*

² *See* 5 C.F.R. § 2638.104 ("Government ethics responsibilities of agency ethics officials.").



are maintained by an individual's employing office.³ Waivers issued to individual employees must be requested and obtained from the individual's employing office.⁴

To the extent you seek information about whether any public financial disclosure filers working in the current administration have outstanding student loan debt, that information would be required to be reported on their financial disclosure report if the obligation exceeded \$10,000 at any time during the prior year.⁵ Presidentially-appointed, Senate confirmed (PAS) appointees' records (e.g., public financial disclosure reports and ethics pledge waivers) are available through OGE's website. OGE makes the records of Executive Levels I and II PAS officials publicly available for viewing and downloading [here](#). Through a statutorily required request process, OGE makes the records for other public filers whose materials are subject to OGE's review available [here](#).⁶ Notably, the information contained in these documents reflects compliance with ethics requirements and may not provide all of the information included in your request. Moreover, the financial disclosures of individuals who file confidential reports (OGE Form 450) are not releasable.⁷

With respect to documents and information about executive branch employees and political appointees whose documents do not come to OGE for review, your request must be directed to the individual's employing agency pursuant to statutory release requirements.⁸

If your staff have any questions about the contents of this letter or require additional assistance in locating, accessing, or requesting records via OGE's website, they may contact Assistant Counsel Grant Anderson at 202-482-9318.

Sincerely,

Emory A. Rounds, III
Director

³ Exec. Order No. 13989, sec. 4(e) ("All pledges signed by appointees, and all waiver certifications with respect thereto, shall be filed with the head of the appointee's agency for permanent retention in the appointee's official personnel folder or equivalent folder.").

⁴ 18 U.S.C. § 208(d).

⁵ 5 U.S.C. app. § 102(a)(4).

⁶ 5 U.S.C. app. § 105. Records of political appointees whose financial disclosure reports do not come to OGE for review and certification are maintained by the individuals' employing agencies, and must be requested directly from those agencies. If an individual is not listed on OGE's website, OGE does not maintain records for that individual.

⁷ 5 U.S.C. app. § 107(a)(2).

⁸ See 5 U.S.C. app. § 105; 18 U.S.C. § 208(d); and 5 U.S.C. § 552a.

cc: The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Bobby Scott, Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor